

Growing up on my family's fourth-generation farm and ranch near Houghton, SD, I know firsthand that agriculture remains the key driver of our economic growth. Through my role on the House Agriculture Committee, I will continue to find ways to protect our family farms and ranches that complement and facilitate new economic growth in our communities; to level the playing field at home and abroad for American agriculture; and to keep feeding the world throughout this new century. We all have a stake in creating an environment where young people can thrive on and around our farms and ranches. With economic uncertainty across the country, I will oppose efforts to weaken the strong safety net created in the 2008 Farm Bill and to ensure that farmers and ranchers can continue to have access to credit to keep their farming operations viable.

Here are some key issues affecting South Dakota farmers and ranchers that I will be working on in Congress:

### **2008 Farm Bill Implementation**

The Farm Bill is the single most important piece of legislation for South Dakota producers, families, and businesses, and it's critical to ensuring the viability of farm and ranch operations across the state. Through my role on the House Agriculture Committee, I will continue to make timely implementation of the 2008 Farm Bill one of my top priorities. Of specific importance is:

- Ensuring that producers have the tools and information necessary to make decisions on whether to enroll in new farm safety net programs, like the Average Crop Revenue Program (ACRE);
- Timely establishment of agriculture disaster assistance programs to provide greater certainty for producers when dealing with unexpected natural disasters;
- Overseeing farm credit and loan programs to provide much-needed credit for beginning and socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers;
- Ensuring that federal farm payment reform measures protect producer privacy while eliminating fraud and abuse, keeping farm payments targeted to those family farmers that most need them.
- Conducting oversight of U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) program operations to find ways to increase efficiencies and eliminate waste, fraud and abuse, ensuring that the taxpayers' dollars are being spent wisely.
- Secure adequate funding and timely rulemaking for critical Farm Bill energy programs, including the Biorefinery Assistance Program, Rural Energy for America Program, Biomass Crop Assistance Program, and Biomass Research and Development Initiative.

### **Conservation**

I will continue to work to ensure that environmentally sensitive land in South Dakota can remain in the Conservation Reserve Program; provide adequate resources for the Wetlands Reserve Program, Grasslands Reserve Program, and Environmental Quality Incentives Program, and take steps to protect our native sod and keep our native prairie habitat intact. Through conservation of our grasslands and wetlands we can help maintain South Dakota's viable ranching operations and help ensure we not only have safe drinking water but abundant fishing, hunting, and other recreational opportunities.

### **Livestock**

I am proud that the 2008 Farm Bill contains the first livestock title, including the agreement on mandatory country-of-origin labeling (COOL). I will continue to work to support our domestic livestock producers, including adequate enforcement of existing antitrust laws and promoting policies to encourage competition in the marketplace. South Dakota livestock and dairy producers provide some of the safest food in the world. I will work to ensure that our ranchers and dairy farmers have adequate access to foreign markets and are not subject to unfair trade bans or retaliatory actions from other countries. Another area of concern for me is the health and safety of our domestic herds and food supply, including prevention of major diseases like Foot and Mouth Disease. As USDA considers proposals to implement a national animal ID system, I will work to ensure that local producer concerns are taken into consideration. It is important that any animal ID system be based in sound science and have animal health as its central goal and I will continue to rely on the perspective and experience of our South Dakota producers in dealing with disease mitigation as any potential system moves forward.

[Back](#)